/221 cont./

796 785 the day lasts 18-20 hours, fasting constitutes a great feat, especially for the poor who have to work all day. The latter therefore often do not observe it. The law permits [709] taking food for three days or three periods of three days only for [346] [493] old people, sick people, women in labor, and nursing mothers and children.

796 After "uraza," the holiday of "Ramazanayta (Urazayta) begins. Like [262] the preceding holiday

A type of urban Kirghiz /Kazak/ mosque.

it is marked by an abundant consumption of meat (mutton and horsemeat) and kumiss, and by the arrangement of various amusements (fights, races, etc.). 769 In addition to these two holidays the Kirghiz /Kazak/ celebrate memorial services for their most honored dead, which are accompanied by various feasts, the usual races, competitions in horseback riding, etc.

/222/ The Kirghiz /Kazak/ have not yet emerged from 797 under the rule of nature. This dependence can be felt with 789 every step of the Kirghiz /Kazak/. All the events of his life which are in some way outstanding are linked with special signs, the carrying out of various rituals, etc. The inveterate Kirghiz /Kazak/ will not depart on a long journey, for example, on a Saturday or a Tuesday for fear of misfortune, for these days are considered "dangerous." In extremity he must carry out certain ceremonies in order to protect himself from inevitable misfortune, for example, to go out the night before, taking 40 steps from the yurt in the direction of the proposed journey, and to

/222 cont./

bury a handful of salt in a small bag. When he starts out on the dangerous day the Kirghiz /Kazak/ disinters the small bag and takes it with him, believing that this will insure him against misfortune. Amulets are quite widespread, being hung both on favorite animals and on children (on the chest for boys and sometimes in the hair of little girls).

From earlier paganism the Kirghiz /Kazak/ retain a belief in the baksi /bakshi/ (shaman). He is usually an old man to whom they turn for the healing of sicknesses. Christianity is finding conversion among the Kirghiz /Kazak/ very difficult. The activity of the Semipalatinsk and Turgai Kirghiz /Kazak/ missions has not produced noticeable results. The preaching has had some success only among the poor people (dzhetak or baygush), for whom purely material considerations are not least important among the incentives for adopting Christianity. Cases of reconversion to Islam are not rare.